

March 17, 2020

– Coronavirus Update –

Veterinary Medicine as an Essential Service

- Veterinary medicine is currently not deemed by the provincial government to be an essential service. The College continues to monitor developments on this matter and will provide an update if anything changes.
- At this time, there has been *no government directive* to reduce or limit services by non-essential service providers.
- The College supports every registrant in using their professional judgment when deciding to alter services to support staff, public and animal health during this pandemic situation.

Reducing Services &/or Closures

The College is aware there are a variety of factors related to Coronavirus/COVID-19 that will affect veterinary facilities and their ability to provide veterinary services that are necessary to protect animal and public health. Veterinarians are encouraged to employ their best judgment and to determine the scope and breadth of services that they can reasonably and safely provide during this time. Reducing or altering services may be a reasonable step for some facilities. Steps may include:

- Decreasing or suspending elective procedures and other non-essential veterinary services
- Completing patient triage external to the building
- Adopting client/patient screening protocols for appointment scheduling (see resources below)
- Using telemedicine where appropriate and necessary (see Telemedicine document)
- Implementing facility and staff protocols to safeguard employees and clients, and to plan for the future as the situation continues to develop (see resources below)

A veterinarian may determine the need to temporarily close the facility due staffing shortages or other uncontrollable circumstances. If the need arises, a veterinarian is expected to consider questions such as:

- How will clients be notified of the temporary closure?
- What tools will be used to notify clients? (eg. website, answering service message, signage, email notification, etc)
- How will clients access their animal(s) medical record information?
- What nearby facilities are an option to refer clients for veterinary care?
- How will the closed facility be secured, including drugs and hazardous materials?
- How will the facility ensure that these steps are clearly documented?

Resources for Veterinary Practices

- [CVMA's Member Advisory](#) (posted on CVMA public access News & Events page)
 - Includes a "COVID Clinic Checklist" ~ halfway down the message
 - Includes a "[Patient Screening Pathways Chart](#)" (decision tree considering risk to hospital staff of exposure from client) developed by Dr. Scott Weese,
- CVMA's March 3rd post: [COVID-19 – Prevention Tips](#)
- [Webinar](#) – Thursday, March 19, 2020 @ 2 PM EST (by Drs. Jason Stull & Scott Weese)